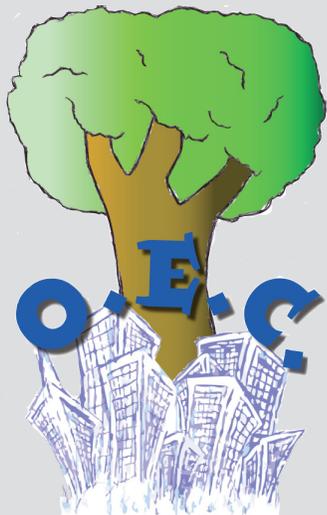




NEWS

Spring 2014



www.onondagaeearthcorps.org

OEC had an exciting spring start to our 10 year anniversary! OEC hired 6 young adults and 6 high school age youth, to engage in new and on-going projects. The crews planted over 400 trees, developed community outreach campaigns, worked with local partners to educate about trees, and maintained several green infrastructure installations all over Syracuse.

OEC would also like to share the exciting news that Greg Michel, long-time program director, has accepted an interim position as OEC's Executive Director. Thank you, Greg!



The Urban Waters Trainees learning about downstream pollution.



The Young Adult Crew hard at work at a GI installation downtown.

Have a spot for a tree? OEC will plant for FREE!

Onondaga Earth Corps is working with Save the Rain to plant street trees in the City of Syracuse to prevent stormwater overflows. OEC youth have planted 469 trees this year and will be looking for hundreds of new planting sites in the city right of way. Find out if you have a spot for a FREE TREE; Call Cornell Cooperative Extension for more details: 424-9485 Ext. 228

Help trees survive and thrive. Find out how to Adopt-a-Tree at www.onondagaeearthcorps.org



469 Spring Trees Planted!

By Ioane Etuale, Tree Crew Supervisor

The 2014 Spring Tree planting season went better than ever. The Young Adult crew planted 469 trees all over the city, including Brighton, University Hill, and the Northside. In addition to planting in the neighborhood areas, we also planted a substantial number of trees in several parks as part of reforestation and beautification of public spaces. This project is a continuation of OEC's collaboration with Onondaga County's Save the Rain program, where OEC hires Syracuse youth to implement the on-going improvement with Syracuse's green infrastructure and create lasting community involvement.

After two weeks of methodic, intense training, the Young Adult crew (Ages 19 to 25) was prepped with tree identification, planting and tree care skills to put into use. They quickly became familiar with a regular routine to plant up to 40 trees a day! The

crew adapted well to planting three different stock trees we receive.

As always, OEC does not want to have all the fun. We reached out to the community for participation and the community responded positively. Their participation not only brought joy, but also



Syracuse's children and other volunteers came out to help the OEC young adult crew and Cornell Cooperative Extension plant the final 9 spring trees along Onondaga Creek Parkway.

ownership of the revitalization efforts in their neighborhood. The increasing interest was very noticeable this season as people continue to approach the crew asking about the program and requesting trees. CommuniTree stewards, including stalwart Joe, also joined us multiple times throughout the season. The first was the Community Planting at McKinley Park, where the city approved the planting of 10 fruit and nut trees that will create an edible landscape for Syracuse's Southside. The second was a smaller planting day throughout the season, finishing with a community planting on Onondaga Creek Boulevard where a reforestation project has allowed dozens of trees, of all kinds, to take root.

On-going care for these trees include caging the young fruit and nut trees in three foot cages (you may recognize them the next time you drive by!) and thorough watering to ensure their best chance at survival.

OEC also co-ordinates the Adopt-A-Tree program, where community members and

landowners are encouraged to 'adopt' a young tree and with the help of OEC workshops and resources, care for it during the crucial first year. Each new tree needs 25 gallons of water, every week, which means every tree adopter plays a critical role in establishing the sapling's health life.

If you are interested in adopting some of our 469 new trees, please contact OEC, and join the team to in caring for Syracuse's new green canopy this summer!

Urban Waters Green Infrastructure Trains 14 Youth

OEC partnered with Onondaga Environmental Institute and Environmental Finance Center to offer a job readiness and green infrastructure (GI) training program for local youth this March.

The 16 hour training ran over the course of 5 sessions, and covered topics ranging from professionalism and communication, to watershed management and GI basics. The youth also participated in 2 field trips to observe local implementations of GI projects and watershed management.

OEC Spring 2014 Fact Check

- 12 youth hired
- 469 trees planted
- Over 800 zoo patrons educated by OEC Youth
- 17 Zoo Guides trained on the objectives and function of new GI installations in Rosamond Gifford Zoo
- 1 8'X12' green roof shelter built
- 2 PSA videos completed

OEC was able to employ 6 of the youth on the Spring Youth Crew to complete green infrastructure outreach and social media projects. Two other graduates were also placed with the OEC Young Adult Crew, where they would soon learn the basics of urban forestry, tree planting, and green infrastructure maintenance.

The Urban Waters training session is part of a 2 year project, implemented with support from the federal Environmental Protection Agency, to host adult and youth trainings once yearly. The next training will take place Spring 2015.

A Day at OEC's Young Adult Crew Orientation

Orientation is a special time for Onondaga Earth Corps, and this Spring 2014 was no different. Two weeks seems like plenty of time, but after scheduling multiple trainings, practice, team-builders, inspirational speakers, and mental readiness for our 10 month program, that time flies by. Read on for a glimpse of a day in the life of OEC's crew, during Spring Orientation.

Monday, March 31st

7:00 am: Breakfast Prep Crew arrives at the kitchen.

7:30am: Breakfast is served!

8:00am: Cleanup Crew begins,



Urban Waters youth brave the chilly March weather to explore the Onondaga Creekwalk

Lunch Detail begins.

8:30am: Workday Start, Stretch and Safety Circle

9:00am Classification and Diversity Lessons, with Charles and Greg

10:00am Plant biology and Plant ID, with Adrienne

11:00am Healthy Eating with Cheryl of Onondaga CCE

12:00n Lunch Prep: Everyone

12:30pm: Lunchtime!

1:00pm Introduction to Green Infrastructure with Amy of the Onondaga Environmental Institute

2:00pm Guided Tree hike, with Kim and Brenda of Onondaga CCE

4:00pm Steve Harris, City-County Arborist, on Urban Trees

4:30 pm Keynote Speaker: Tom Rhoades, Commission of Water Environment Protection for Onondaga County

5:00pm: Cookout Dinner is served with the help of OEC's Board, Thanks Board Members!

6:30pm: Cleanup: Everyone

7:00pm: Fireside Chat with Baye Muhammed, Commissioner of Syracuse Department of Parks, Recreation and Youth Programs

8:00pm: S'mores!



Eliezer as OEC man during filming of video about green infrastructure stewardship.

This kind of packed schedule was the norm for our Young Adult Crew's first two work weeks, March 30th to April 14th. The new corpsmembers were trained in urban forestry, green infrastructure function and maintenance, leadership and professional development, teamwork, and OEC policies and history. The Orientation culminated in the crew's voluntary participation in Clean Up 'Cuse, Saturday April 14th.

"OEC MAN!": Spring Crew Revives a Syracuse Superhero

The Spring Youth Crew ran an intense six weeks filled with community outreach and projects.

One of the most exciting

projects this season was a Public Service Announcement for Save the Rain. The short video's objective was to introduce citizens to the challenges facing Onondaga Lake and also share what the Save the Rain campaign has done to successfully reduce these challenges and clarify Onondaga Lake's waters.

The crew split into two groups, and successfully planned and filmed two videos that use different tactics to reach the audience.

One video followed the story of a young man as he learned the many ways Syracuse has improved its green infrastructure efforts. The other uses the popular theme, superheroism, to convey the need for everyday action from ordinary citizens. The superhero featured at the beginning of this video, OEC Man, has been featured in previous videos created by OEC crews and was cleverly portrayed under the Spring 2014 Youth's acting and directing skills.

The crew also worked with the Young Eco-Cuse Explorers program to teach about green infrastructure installations in Syracuse, and trained peers with the Zoo Guide program at Rosamond Gifford Zoo on the new green infrastructure improvements to the zoo grounds.

Winter Works at OEC

By Charles Rivers, Youth Crew and GI Crew Supervisor

A part of Onondaga Earth Corps' mission is to engage our youth in community stewardship. Throughout the winter a continuous effort was made to fulfill this goal. The youth who participated were given a chance to participate in community stewardship activities and gained extra support from the organization's staff to develop



Commissioner Muhammed left a strong impression with crew members when he said, "Don't be a statistic. You control your destiny." during his fireside talk at orientation.

visions for higher education. Our youth spent time exploring STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education by actively volunteering in the Maker's Fair at both Le Moyne College and Onondaga Community College. Our youth were also given the chance to volunteer at Syracuse University during basketball season to fundraise for Rotary Club, while enjoying the games. The culminating event for OEC's winter activities was a formal meeting of the Youth Advisory Council. This provided the OEC program staff an opportunity to hear feedback and suggestions from past participants. After all, the youth are our future leaders so at Onondaga Earth Corps, it's a part of our mission to empower them by developing their leadership abilities.

It has been wonderful working with the youth of Onondaga Earth Corps. It's an opportunity for all to grow and develop in areas that is further nurtured through experience and exposure. Our youth have proven that if given a chance, they are willing to give back to the community while learning new things and meeting other youth. 

ABOUT THE ONONDAGA EARTH CORPS

The Onondaga Earth Corps (OEC) is a youth development and employment program for youth ages 15 to 25 living in the City of Syracuse. As youth work on community and environmental service projects, they learn valuable job and life skills, community based problem solving skills, civic engagement, environmental stewardship and technical skills in urban forestry and other urban green infrastructure.

OEC began in 2004 as the Eli MacDonald Green Team, a neighborhood initiative to beautify the community and employ youth. In 2005, the program changed its name to the Onondaga Earth Corps and incorporated the youth conservation corps model. Since then, under the leadership of many community collaborators, the OEC has become a leading force in revitalizing our urban environment through urban forestry, green infrastructure and outreach efforts on throughout the City of Syracuse.



OEC activities are made possible in part by funding from Onondaga County's Save the Rain campaign, as well as our ongoing support from Onondaga Environmental Institute and SUNY Educational Opportunity Center.

Thank you, Alverna Heights!

Once again, Onondaga Earth Corps was lucky to bring youth to the quiet and restorative campus of Alverna Heights, set next to the woods of Green Lakes State Park. It was a great experience for our youth and a wonderful start to our program. Thank you, Sisters of St. Francis!



THE VISION

- Help youth understand the relationship between people and the urban ecosystem.
- Engage youth in hands-on community and environment service learning projects
- Train youth for future jobs and careers in environmental fields
- Empower youth by developing their leadership abilities that help them analyze situations, solve problems and implement strategies to improve their communities.

CONTACT

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or visit us on our website at
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315-565-3797

DONATE YOUR TIME, TALENT, CAPITAL

Support the work of the Onondaga Earth Corps however suits you best! We are always looking for creative ways to grow our program. YOU CAN HELP!
Visit www.onondagaeearthcorps.org for more details.

